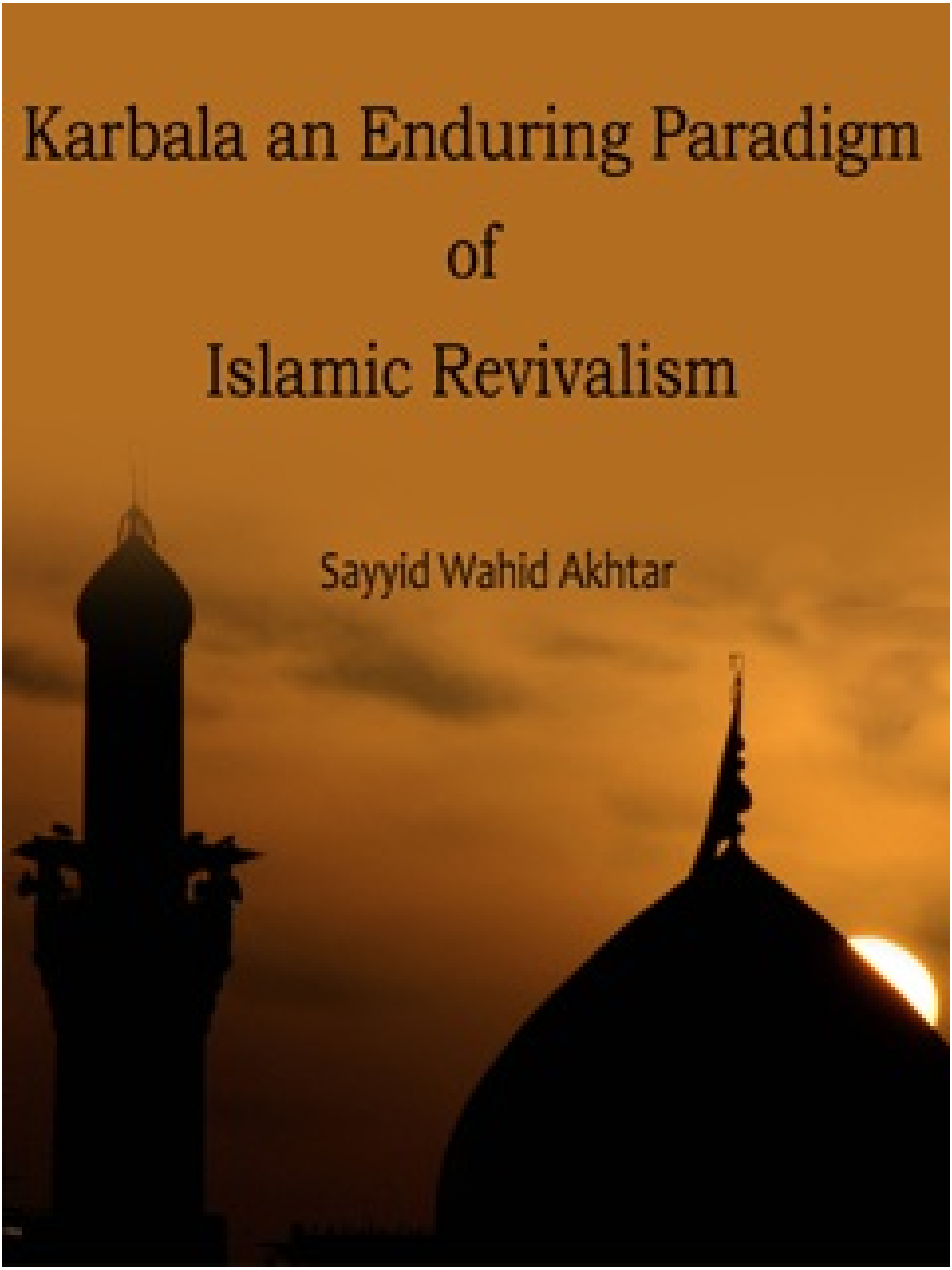

Karbala an Enduring Paradigm
of
Islamic Revivalism
Sayyid Wahid Akhtar

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Karbala', an Enduring Paradigm of Islamic Revivalism

Dr. S. Wahid Akhtar, formerly Professor and Chairman, Dept. of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, presented the paper at the conference on Imam Khomeini wa Farhange Ashura, (Imam Khomeini and the culture of Ashura), held on June ۱-۲, ۱۹۹۵ .at Tehran

The martyrdom of Imam Husayn ibn 'Ali ('a) and his companions in Karbala' proved to be the beginning of the downfall of the Banu Umayyah dynasty which had usurped the Islamic khilafah by deceit, repression, and corruption of the Muslim community. Though the Imam ('a) was martyred with his family and companions, and apparently his murderers seemed to emerge winners from the conflict, it was the martyr of .Karbala' who was the real victor

The mourning ceremonies that have been held through the last fourteen hundred years to commemorate this most significant event in the history of Islam are generally known as Muharram ceremonies, as they are held during the month of .Muharram in remembrance of the 'Ashura' movement

This incident has its background whose elaborate details have been given by Muslim historians and I need not cite them here. Briefly, it may be said that Imam Husayn's revolt, staged against the tyranny, injustice, and repression of the regime and torture and

execution of pious Muslims, which violated the Islamic concept of a just Islamic polity and society, was to uphold the ideals and values of Islam propounded in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S), to rescue the higher human values, moral, social, political and spiritual, and to preserve the true spirit of Islam. It was basically aimed by the martyred Imam ('a) to rescue Islam as the message of the last Prophet, a message that had to endure, not only in the hearts and spirits of saints but on the .plane of society, and he achieved his purpose most completely

The episode of Karbala' became the everlasting stage on which, more than anything else, the great spirit of an Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt was put for eternal display, not in mere words or traditions recorded in books, but against the background of the greatest tragedy in human history and scenes of love and loyalty, bravery and sacrifice, nobility and high spirituality, blood and battle, and also those of treachery .and betrayal, human abasement and wretchedness, perversity and depravity

Due to his refusal to compromise with godlessness and tyranny, the Imam has been remembered as the very embodiment of tawhid, of la ilaha illallah, by all great Islamic mystics, thinkers, writers and poets. In the words of the great Indian Sufi of Iranian :origin, Khwajah Mu'in-al-Din Chishti

(He gave his life but wouldn't give his hand in the hand of Yazid (for allegiance, bay'ah

Verily Husayn is the

(foundation of la ilaha illa Allah(۱

Mahmoud Ayoub in his study of the devotional aspects of 'Ashura', Redemptive Suffering in Islam, justifiably interprets the Imam's message to Muslims as a call for enjoining good and prohibiting evil. In a will he made to Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah :while departing from Makkah, the Imam declares

Indeed, I have not risen up to do mischief, neither as an adventurer, nor to cause corruption and tyranny. I have risen up solely to seek the reform of the Ummah of my grandfather (S). I want to command what is good and stop what is wrong, and (in this) .I follow the conduct of my grandfather and my father, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib

In a letter that he wrote to the people of Kufah, in a short sentence he outlines the :Islamic concept of a worthy ruler

By my life, the leader is one who acts in accordance with the Scripture, upholds justice in society, conducts its affairs according to what is righteous, and dedicates his self to .God. Was-salam

Addressing Hurr ibn Yazid Riyahi and his troops, who had been dispatched by 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, the infamous governor of Kufah, to intercept the Imam's caravan on the way and to stop him from entering Kufah, Imam Husayn ('a) quotes this tradition of the Prophet (s), which states the duty of Muslims vis-a-vis corrupt and :un-Islamic rulers

O people! Verily the Messenger of Allah (s) said: “Whoever observes a sovereign legalizing what God has made unlawful, violating the covenant

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۱- There is no god save God, i.e. the spirit of rejection of all worldly powers that stand .in the ways of man's submission to God

of God, opposing the Sunnah of the Messenger of God, and treating the creatures of God sinfully and oppressively, and does not oppose him with his speech and action, ".God has a right to bring him to the same fate as that of the tyrant

Indeed, these people (i.e. Yazid and the ruling Umayyads) have committed themselves to the following of Satan, and abandoned obedience to God. They have given currency to corruption and abolished the Islamic laws, plundering the public treasury, making lawful what God has forbidden and forbidding what God has permitted. And I, of all people, have a greater right to act [in accordance with the .[Prophet's exhortation

On reaching Karbala', a point where they had been forced to discontinue their journey and to disembark on the orders of Ibn Ziyad, the Imam stood up to address his companions. In that sermon he declares that life under tyranny is not worthy of man, .unless the people rise in an attempt to restore the higher values

Don't you see that what is true and right is not acted upon and what is false and wrong is not forbidden? In such a situation, the man of faith yearns for the meeting wit', his Lord. Indeed, (in such conditions) to me death is happiness, and life under the .yoke of tyrants is disgrace

Giving the details of Imam Husayn's refusal to accept a tyrannical and unjust ruler, starting from his journey from Madinah to Makkah and afterwards through its various stages until

the Imam reached Karbala', the scene of his battle and martyrdom, historians refers to verses which are said to have been recited by the Imam on the night of the ١٠th of :('Muharram (the day of 'Ashura

.O Time (dahr), fie on you of a friend

.How many are those you claim at the morn and eventide

,Many a friend, and many a one seeking revenge

.Yet Time is not satisfied with a substitute or proxy

;Truly judgement belongs to the Glorious One

.[And every living soul takes the path [of death

It is important to note that the Imam's address to Time inspired a number of Muslim thinkers to propound a new revolutionary concept of Time with reference to the Qur'anic verses in the Surat al-'Asr. The Imam did not actually vilify time, but he .condemned the time-servers

Otherwise Time, as interpreted by Iqbal, the contemporary philosopher poet of the Indian subcontinent, is, in the light of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions, an expression and manifestation of the continuing process of God's creativity as well as .the creativity of the human being

While addressing Time, Imam Husayn ('a) indicated that man is not a time-server but time is at the service of man. He proved by his example that man has the power to .turn the tide of time and he actually did it

The tragedy of Karbala', which was in the words of Imam Khomeini the symbol of blood's triumph-the blood of the martyrs-over the sword, transformed not only the history of Islam

but also human history for ever. Husayn ('a) initiated a movement that proved to be an archetype representing an eternal struggle of truth against falsehood, justice against injustice and tyranny, human dignity against dehumanization, the revolt of the .oppressed against oppressors, and overpowering of the strong by society's weak

The un-Islamic rule of the Umayyads was challenged after him by his followers and descendants, such as Zayd ibn 'Ali, Yahya ibn Zayd, and before them by Mukhtar al-Thaqafi and the Tawwabin, which created a ferment that finally resulted in the overthrow of the Umayyads and the coming to power of Banu 'Abbas, who deceitfully claimed to avenge the martyrdom of Husayn ('a) and to advocate his revolutionary .mission

However, this movement continued to be inspired by the message of 'Ashura' during the reign of the 'Abbasid caliphs and afterwards. The emergence of Shi'i Sufi movements, like those of the Sarbidaran, the Nuqtawis, and the Mar'ashis, as well as the Fatimi-Ismaiili sects, culminated in the victory of the Safawi Sufi order in Iran, who made it a point that the 'Ashura' movement should continue as an inspiring force and dynamic principle in Muslim polity and society. It were the Safawis during whose reign .the 'Ashura' commemoration ceremonies took a particular shape

The remembrance of the tragedy of Karbala' as a ritual did not remain confined to Iran and Iraq, but also influenced the socio-political and cultural life of Muslims in the Indian sub-continent. As a result of this, in India, particularly

in Avadh, there developed a culture that was inspired by the spirit of 'Ashura' which was all-embracing. Other Muslim sects and even non- Muslims came under the .cultural influence of this movement

Unfortunately this movement, which represented a resurgence of the 'Ashura' culture in literature and other art forms, gradually degenerated in the course of time in Iran, .Iraq, and the sub-continent, losing its revolutionary spirit

One of the greatest contributions of Imam Khomeini is that he recreated and revived the spirit of 'Ashura' through his messages against the despotic Pahlavi rule and the exploitive domination of alien powers over Muslims throughout the world. Some of his disciples and contemporaries have also contributed to this 'Ashura'ic resurgence of Islam, Shari'ati and Mutahhari in particular. Imam Khomeini and other champions of the revolutionary ideology of Islam in Iran made use of the traditional ritual 'Ashura' ceremonies to reach the common Muslim masses for effectively conveying their .message to the grassroots of the Muslim society

There have been various attempts in the Muslim world to reinterpret and reconstruct Islamic ideology to meet the challenges of time. Ghazali demolished what was in his view unIslamic in the ideas of Muslim philosophers; Jamaluddin Asadabadi, popularly known as Afghani, emphasized the importance of ijtihad and propagated a pan-Islamic ideology; his followers in Egypt and the Arab world, particularly Muhammad .'Abduh, Rashid Rida' and others, revived the practice of ijtihad in the Sunni world

Before them, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah had made attempts to

awaken Muslims to the needs of the time and revive the Islamic spirit. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Iqbal tried to reconstruct Islamic beliefs according to the challenges of the time and the ascendant supremacy .of science and Western philosophy

In the words of Iqbal, all the earlier Muslim thinkers had failed in their mission because they destroyed the prevalent philosophies but could not reconstruct Islamic .ideas on a secure ground, and they failed to influence the Muslim society in general

This failure, in my view, is due to these thinkers' inability to reach the Muslim masses and convey their message to them in a popular idiom. The success of Imam Khomeini and the other ideologues of revolutionary Iran found the popular platform of the Muharram ceremonies as a convenient weapon against the repressive Pahlavi rulers, imperialism and Western domination, particularly the exploitive American dominance of the East, to awaken Muslim masses and revive in them the spirit of martyrdom inspired by the episode of Karbala'. Because of this they succeeded in their .movement, while others had failed to achieve the desired end

Imam Khomeini not only rekindled the flame hidden in the hearts of the pupils of 'Ashura' culture, but also vehemently criticized the so-called 'ulama' and fuqaha' who, as time-servers, interpreted Islam and Islamic laws according to the convenience of .the rulers and the exploiting class

One who makes a study of al-Kawthar, a selection in two volumes of the speeches of

Imam Khomeini, as well his writings on the Islamic government, in particular his lectures on wilayat-e faqih, one would be surprised to find that the most vehement criticism of Muslim clerics, Shi'i and Sunni, was made by a Muslim scholar.

It was because Imam Khomeini understood profoundly the spirit of the 'Ashura' movement and was angry that the so-called 'ulama' and rawdeh-khwans had transformed its true spirit into a mere ritual of lamentation over the martyrdom of Husayn ('a) and his companions, making it a regular means of their livelihood. He criticized and condemned these persons and rejuvenated the true spirit of 'Ashura' among the Muslim masses, who were sincerely devoted to Muharram ceremonies.

These ceremonies provided him with the most effective weapon to propagate his message based on the Islamic values of justice and truth. Had there been no such platform to reach the masses, he might have also failed in his attempt to revive true Islamic values and reawaken the Muslim masses. It was here that the secret of his success lay. The important milestones of his movement could not have been covered without taking recourse to 'Ashura'.

The tragic event of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn ('a) at Karbala' deeply influenced the tide of time in various ways, in the fields of philosophy, kalam, political thought, social reform, and cultural resurgence of the Muslim world. In India (and also Pakistan and Bangladesh), a culture developed that was inspired and motivated by the 'Ashura' movement.

Even during the

period of Muslim decadence that culture has, in the words of Iqbal, produced the cream of Muslim poetry and literature in the form of the elegies (marathi) in Urdu, which have exercised a great influence on the Indo-Muslim culture, an influence that .extended to non-Muslim communities as well

Presently one can find the influence of the 'Ashura' movement in this region even in non-Muslim literature and culture. Even in the so-called progressive (Marxist and modern) literature, particularly poetry, one can find Karbala' and 'Ashura' used as metaphors to depict the present reality. All these aspects may be elaborated in the form of a lengthy article or even a book, but here, for the purpose of brevity, I would .abstain from going into details

Of course, there emerged some movements in the Muslim world inspired by the 'Ashura', but could not leave a lasting effect and died away after a short time. Imam Khomeini's success in bringing about the Islamic Revolution in Iran and, through it, influencing the entire Muslims world, lies in the fact that he made the 'Ashura' movement the prime mover of a continuing process in human history for evolving a better society that could safeguard the principles of justice, social equity, and the .cultural independence of the East

The impact of the 'Ashura' movement on Muslim polity and culture and its role in changing and moulding the history of Islam and the world may be discussed in detail under various heads such as: its impact on Muslim

theology ('ilm al-kalam), mysticism, and philosophy, its impact on socio-economic reforms in the Muslim world, its impact on political upheavals in the Muslim world, and its impact on culture, literature, fine arts and other creative expressions of Muslim .ethos

Imam Khomeini played the most influential role in our times in translating the revolutionary and creative potential of this movement into reality through his writings, speeches, leadership, and his reinterpretation of the fundamental principle of ".“enjoining good and prohibiting evil

It is necessary to elaborate certain significant aspects of the commemoration ceremonies of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn ('a). Generally these ceremonies are viewed from two angles: one is the spiritual, pietistic angle that considers them a means of catharsis and redemption; the other is the socio-political approach that regards it as instrumental in the realization of the Islamic ideals for which the great .sacrifice (dibh-e 'azim) was made

The former approach, which treats the 'Ashura' rituals from a pietistic angle, gives importance to mourning, lamenting, breasting beating in remembrance of the mazlum Imam and considers sorrow as the means of participating in the sufferings of the Imam ('a), his family, and companions. This approach is supported by the .traditions of the Imams ('a) of the Prophet's Family

There are traditions that emphasize that the tragedy of Karbala' was predestined and all prophets of God from Adam to the Seal of the Prophets (S) had been informed of the sacrifice of Husayn ('a) through Gabrael in advance. They themselves mourned and

made it obigatory for all believers to mourn and be sorrowful in the remembrance of .this great tragedy

Fatimah al-Zahra' ('a), the bereaved mother of Husayn ('a), is believed to be the host of the mourning observances, and she is the main addressee of all expressions of sorrow and the condolences that are offered, in this world as well as the other world, and, it believed, she will intercede in favour of her son's mourners on the Day of .Judgement

Authentic traditions record that Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al- 'Abidin ('a) mourned his father and his companions throughout his life after Karbala'. He was present at the .site of the tragedy and witnessed all the sufferings of his father

Moreover, he had to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the womenfolk and children of his family after 'Ashura' and he passed through the tribulations of the journey of the captive family of the Prophet (S) from Karbala' to Kufah and from Kufah to Damascus, putting up with all the humiliation with exemplary equanimity, patience, .and firmness of character

He is regarded by the Sufis as one of their early great masters, who also emphasized the value of God's fear and sorrow for the sake of purifying the heart and soul. His collection of supplications, known as al-Sahifat al-Sajjadiyyah or al-Sahifat al-kamilah, is a valuable source of ma'rifah and high spirituality

The other great mourner of Karbala' was Imam Husayn's sister, Zaynab, known as "“Zaynab-e Kubra” and “Thani-e Zahra

i.e. the Second Fatimah). She bore the martyrdom of her two young sons, 'Awn and) Muhammad, without shedding a tear, but was the first to mourn her brother. After the episode of Karbala', Imam Sajjad and Zaynab made continuous efforts to create the institution of mourning for the martyred Imam as a vehicle for the revolutionary message of Islam against perverse socio-political conditions that negated the Islamic .ideal of a healthy society ruled by committed and competent leaders

The institution of mourning over Imam Husayn became a vehicle for the propagation of almost everything that Islam stood for. It was not the martyrdom of an ordinary moral, no matter however pious or saintly. It was the martyrdom of an Infallible Imam and the greatest wali and vicegerent of God and the God-appointed heir to the .Prophet's authority and spirituality

To those who understood the sublime spiritual station of Husayn ibn 'Ali it was as if the Prophet himself had been martyred at Karbala'. And what greater calamity could be imagined? As the martyred Imam represented the highest embodiment of Islam, his .martyrdom was the greatest crime that could be perpetrated against Islam and God

As we know, the chiefs and elders of Quraysh had conspired to murder the Prophet (S) on the night of his migration to Madinah. Acting out a plan aimed to mislead the waiting assassins, 'Ali ibn Abl Talib slept on the Prophet's bed that night, while the .Prophet (S) left the town

,Later, for a decade

the Quraysh, led by Banu Umayyah, and in particular Abu Sufyan, unrelenting in their hostility against Islam and its prophet, made repeated attempts to annihilate the Muslim community in Madinah, which formed the nucleus of the expanding revolutionary creed. When these attempts did not succeed, they joined the fold of Islam, and this time all their efforts were aimed to recapture the supremacy they had .lost due to the Prophet's movement and to destroy Islam from within

The martyrdom of Imam Husayn and his companions at Karbala' was viewed by Banu Umayyah as a great victory in the course of a long struggle against Islam and its prophet. Their sense of triumph is reflect in the following verses of Ibn al-Ziba'ra that Yazid is reported by historians to have recited when, after the battle Karbala', Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ('a) and the women and children of the Prophet's family were :brought as captives into his court at Damascus

,Alas! Had only my elders that were slain at Badr

.seen the torments of Khazraj by the edge of the sword

,They would have cried 'hurra!' and given cries of joy

!and said: Bravo, O Yazid, for what you have done

,We have killed the elect of their chiefs

.avenging by his death, the viclims of Badr

,The clan of Hashim dallied with kingdom

.and there was neither any revelations nor any news from the heavens

,I am not of Khindif should I fail to take revenge

.from the family of Ahmad for what they have done

As can be seen, the

vengeful spirit that pervades these verses is one that characterized the pagan Arab tribes of the Jahiliyyah. It is a base spirit that still wallows in the loyalties and attachments of a barbaric tribal society that is a stranger to the message of Islam of a .universal creed based on higher moral and spiritual values

Besides mourning for the martyrs, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ('a), Zaynab ('a) and her younger sister, Umm KulthEm, made very forceful orations describing the sufferings of 'Ashura' and its aftermath that moved the listeners to tears. These orations and elegies composed by Zaynab ('a) and 'Umm Kulthum ('a) extempore exercised great influence on the Muslims and were instrumental in propagating the message of 'Ashura' and the message of Imam Husayn's sacrifice. These may be taken as the early foundations of the 'Ashura' movement and beginnings of the mourning .ceremonies

There are equally authentic traditions of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) and Imam 'Ali al-Rida ('a) exhorting their followers regarding the observance of mourning in remembrance of Imam Husayn ('a) and his companions as a means of redemption. In traditions ascribed to the Prophet (S), Fatimah ('a) and the Imams ('a) of the Prophet's .family there is another significant aspect to be taken note of

A recurring theme that characterizes them is that not only the prophets and the angles mourned the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and his companions, but also the whole cosmos mourned this tragedy. Strong winds began to blow on that tenth of Muharram and

when the Imam was beheaded after he fell in the field of battle, there arose tides in rivers and oceans as if they would flood the entire earth, the stars collided, the sun was eclipsed, mountains moved from their places and the seven heavens rained .blood, as blood gushed forth from the ground

Such descriptions of the effect of Imam Husayn's martyrdom on the whole order of being persuade his devotees to participate in a mourning ritual that encompasses all the natural and supra-natural realms. If not taken literally, these traditions may be treated as metaphorical expressions of a tragedy possessing cosmic dimensions. There is no doubt that these traditions served as the source of inspiration for the .devotees and made them feel one with the whole universe and its purpose

Later, when ta'ziyyah, majalis and rawdah khwani became popular rituals among the Shi'ah, sufis, and some other Muslim sects, gradually more and more such descriptions were improvised and many events that never occurred were intertwined with the historically recorded events and authentic traditions of the Imams ('a). This was done sometimes intentionally and sometimes due to ignorance by rawdah .khwans, zakirs and poets

In poetry there might be some justification for the flights of imagination at the pretext of poetic license, but in written prose works such mixing of myth with history and .attributing inauthentic or totally false traditions to the Imams ('a) is unpardonable

This practice was started by some professional rawdah writers with a view to gaining popularity

among naive audiences by touching their most sensitive chords to make them weep. Mulla Wa'iz Kashifi, the author of Rawdat al-shuhada, is severely criticized by Muhaddith Nuri in Lu'lu' wa al-marjan, and by Mutahhari in H'amaseh-ye Husayni. Muhaddith Nuri devotes the major part of his book to describing how sinful it is to .attribute some sayings or occurrences that have no authentic basis

Imam Khomeini at the risk of losing popularity among the naive and inviting wrath of professional akhands all over the Muslim world boldly restrained the devotees from unnecessarily shedding their blood during mourning ceremonies and advised them to .donate their blood for the cause of defending the Islamic revolution

He also transformed the concept of intidhar, waiting for the appearance of the Twelfth Imam ('a), from a passive state of waiting into active adherence to the Islamic .principle of amr b'il-ma'ruf wa nahy 'an'il-munkar

This injunction was aimed to give to the participation of mourners in the ceremonies a consciousness of the relevance of the ongoing socio-political struggle of Islam and the Muslim world against imperialism and oppressors by following the example of Imam Husayn ('a). Thus he successfully synthesized the ritual mourning with social action. He did not disapprove of mourning, but rather encouraged it with a view to .making it the main source of a revolution

Every religion and culture has its own myths along with its history and set of beliefs or ideology. The myths woven together with historical facts create the ethos and

milliue of the popular Shi'i psyche. The ta'ziyah and majalis provided a basis for the integration of the entire cosmos into the community of Imam Husayn's devotees. They served as a perpetual instrument of keeping alive the memory of the tragedy of .Karbala' by all possible means

The other approach which made use of 'Ashura' as a vehicle of social and political action may be reconciled with the spiritual and ritual view of the sufferings of Imam Husayn (a) in a creative and innovative way. The Shi'i ethos is dominated by an urge to .relive the sufferings of the Holy Family ('a) every year

The Shi'ah re-enact the sufferings of Husayn ('a) and his family with renewed vigour year after year. In this enactment of reliving 'Ashura', men and women, young and .old, all participate with a unique sense of commitment and devotion

Thus the 'Ashura' sufferings have come to occupy the very core of their own individual existential experience. That is why poetry inspired by this interiorized subjective experience becomes a genuine and authentic expression of collective human suffering and attains universal validity. For the mourners of Imam Husayn ('a), 'Ashura' is the "Eternal Now." This experience occurs in a pure and real space time continuum, a duration that is eternity. It transcends serial mathematical time of day-.to-day life and renders meaning and purpose to human existence

This experience prompts every member of the community of Husayn's devotees to participate in jihad and a holy struggle against untruth, injustice

and all forms of repression and exploitation of the weak (mustad'ifin) by the .(oppressors (mustakbirin

This Qur'anic terminology was for the first time used in historical and modern context by Imam Khomeini and was further popularized by 'Ali Shari'ati. Mahmoud Ayoub, in Redemptive Suffering in Islam, says. "No one can deny the far-reaching significance of the main rituals (i.e. five daily prayers, fasting of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage ritual of hajj) to the entire Muslim community. But we wish to argue here that the special rituals of the Shi'ah community, the rituals of ta'ziyah and ziyarah, present an intensity of feeling and a total encompassing of space and time unparalleled in the (general piety of the Sunni Islam". (p. ۲۷۷

As mentioned earlier these rituals, which acquired prevalence during the reign of the Al-e Buwayh and found specific forms during the Safawi regime, continued to inspire and stimulate the Shi'i psyche for a long time, despite Shari'ati's claim that the Safawis exploited Shi'i sentiments for capturing power and were later responsible for rendering the mourning rituals soulless formalities. Shari'ati is justified in criticism of the Safawis to an extent, but his view that Iranians adopted many elements of the paraphernalia of the rituals by borrowing from Christian passion rituals during this .period as a result of diplomatic and cultural contacts with the West, is controvertible

It is not yet established that the Shi'ah did not make use of certain symbols of .mourning such as the 'alam, dari', the coffin etc

before coming into contact with the West. It may be conjectured contrarily as well that the Christians borrowed the idea of passion plays during crusades from the Shi'i 'Ashura' rituals of Aleppo and other Syrian towns. Whatever may be the case, the .rituals played a vital role in the Shi'i milieu and psyche

Rituals are essential elements in every religion, but during the periods of decline of a community they are taken as substitutes for the true spirit of a faith and religion is reduced to mere ritualism. Shari'ati called the ritualized form of Shi'i faith tashayyu'-e siyah ('black-clad Shi'ism,' that is, a Shi'ism given to passive mourning) as against the true Shi'i creed which he called tashayyu'-e surkh ('red Shi'ism,' the red colour symbolizing blood, sacrifice, struggle and martyrdom), which stands for active .struggle against all that is untrue and unjust

Shari'ati and Murtadha Mutahhari used the 'Ashura' idiom for awakening and arousing Iranians to the political relevance of Muharram ceremonies, paving through their .speeches and writings the ground for the overthrow of the vicious Pahlavi regime

But the main inspiration came from Imam Khomeini's interpretation of the true spirit of Karbala', which in his view, is not a battle limited to any particular period of time but ".a continuing struggle in the "Eternal Now

By the means of Muharram ceremonies he revitalized and re-energized the downtrodden Muslims to fight courageously, fearlessly, and selflessly unarmed against the most heavily armed regimes in the region which enjoyed total support of

a superpower like the US. He brought about a metamorphosis of the Iranian ethos and, as a result, there emerged from the fire of Phoenix a revolutionary nation of free .men and women

Freedom is at the core of Imam Husayn's message. The Imam fought for freedom of all humanity from hunger, poverty, tyranny, exploitation and injustice. He chose death for himself as a free being and by choosing death he chose God and His Will. In his speech delivered before his journey to Iraq he spoke of his choice in the following :words

O God, You knows that we did not seek, in what we have done, acquisition of power, or ephemeral possessions. Rather, we seek to manifest the truths of Your religion and establish righteousness in Your lands, so that the wronged among Your servants may be vindicated, and that men may abide by the duties (fara'id), laws (sunan) and Your .(ordinances (ahkam

Imam Husayn ('a) recited some verses in answer to Farazdaq, whom he met soon after he started on his journey from Makkah, when he was informed by the poet that while the hearts of the Kufis were with the Imam (a), their swords were with Banu Umayyah. The gist of these verses is that “If bodies be made for death, then the death of a man by the sword in the way of God is the best choice.” The choice of violent death in the way of God was not a better choice only in the

eyes of the Imam ('a), but all men among his relatives and his companions chose .death in the way of god of their own free will

Death was not forced on the them by the choice of Imam Husayn ('a) either, rather, several times, particularly on the night of tenth Muharram, the Imam advised and persuaded them to leave him alone with the enemy. The old and the young among his family members and companions declared that death in the way of God was a better choice in their view. The Imam ('a) blessed them with eternal freedom for their free .choice

The responses of Muslim ibn 'Awsajah, 'Abbas ibn 'Ali, 'Ali Akbar ibn al-Husayn, al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan and others brought tears to the eyes of the Imam ('a). Not only men but the womenfolk of his family and those accompanying his companions offered their loyalty and exhorted their husbands and sons to make their own free choice for sacrificing their lives. They encouraged their men to welcome death on the day of ."Ashura

Women played a very important role in the 'Ashura' movement of the Imam ('a), highlighting the role and freedom that Islam has bestowed upon them. Imam Khomeini was perhaps the first religious leader to have successfully brought women into the active ranks of his movement for the freedom of Muslims in particular and the oppressed people of the world in general. Hence it would not be an exaggeration to say that the spirit of Ashura' was

.re-incarnated in him

p: ۲۳

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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